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THE LADY and the PYE;

OR,

KNOW THYSELF.

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The LADY, &c.

A WORTHY Squire of ſober life,
Had a conceited boaſting wife;
Of *him* ſhe daily made complaint,
Herſelf ſhe thought a very ſaint.
She lov'd to load mankind with blame,
And on their errors build her fame.
Her favourite ſubject of diſpute
Was Eve and the forbidden fruit.

" Had I been Eve," ſhe often cried,
" Man had not fall'n nor woman died;
" I ſtill had kept the orders given,
" Nor for an apple loſt my heaven;
" To gratify my curious mind,
" I ne'er had ruin'd all mankind;
" Nor from a vain deſire to know,
" Entail'd on all my race ſuch woe.
The Squire reply'd, " I fear 'tis true,
" The ſame ill ſpirit lives in you:
" Tempted alike, I dare believe,
" You would have diſobey'd like Eve."
The lady ſtorm'd and ſtill deny'd
Both curioſity and pride.
The Squire ſome future day at dinner,
Reſolv'd to try this boaſtful ſinner;
He griev'd ſuch vanity poſſeſt her,
And thus in ſerious terms addreſs'd her.
" Madam,

" Madam, the uſual ſplendid feaſt,
" With which our wedding day is grac'd,
" With you I muſt not ſhare to-day,
" For buſineſs ſummons me away.
" Of all the dainties on the table,
" Pray eat as long as you are able;
" Indulge in every coſtly diſh;
" Enjoy, 'tis what I really wiſh;
" Only obſerve one prohibition,
" Nor think it a ſevere condition;
" On one ſmall diſh which cover'd ſtands,
" You muſt not dare to lay your hands;
" Go—diſobey not on your life,
" Or henceforth you're no more my wife."

The treat was ſerv'd, the Squire was gone,
The murm'ring lady din'd alone:
She ſaw whate'er could grace a feaſt,
Or charm the eye, or pleaſe the taſte.

But

But while ſhe rang'd from this to that,
From ven'ſon haunch to turtle fat;
On one ſmall diſh ſhe chanc'd to light,
By a deep cover hid from ſight.
" Oh! here it is—yet not for me!
" I muſt not taſte, nay, dare not ſee.
" Why place it there? or why forbid
" That I ſo much as lift the lid?
" Prohibited of this to eat,
" I care not for the ſumptuous treat.
" I wonder if 'tis fowl or fiſh,
" To know what's there I merely wiſh.
" I'll look—O no, I loſe for ever,
" If I'm betray'd my huſband's favour.
" I own I think it vaſtly hard,
" Nay, tyranny, to be debarr'd.
" John you may go—the wine's decanted
" I'll ring or call you when you're wanted."

Now left alone, ſhe waits no longer,
Temptation preſſes more and ſtronger.
" I'll peep—the harm can ne'er be much,
" For tho' I peep I will not touch;
" Why I'm forbid to lift this cover
" One glance will tell, and then 'tis over.
" My huſband's abſent, ſo is John,
" My peeping never can be known."
Trembling, ſhe yielded to her wiſh,
And rais'd the cover from the diſh:
She ſtarts—for lo! an open pye
From which ſix living ſparrows fly.
She calls, ſhe ſcreams, with wild ſurpriſe,
" Haſte John and catch theſe birds," ſhe cries;
John hears not, but to crown her ſhame,
In at her call, her huſband came.
Sternly he frown'd as thus he ſpoke,
" Thus is your vow'd allegiance broke!

" Self-ign'rance led you to believe,
" You did not ſhare the ſin of Eve.
" Like her's, how bleſt was your condition!
" How ſmall my gentle prohibition!
" Yet you, tho' fed with every dainty,
" Sat pining in the midſt of plenty.
" This diſh, thus ſingled from the reſt,
" Of your obedience was the teſt.
" Your mind, unbroke by ſelf denial,
" Cou'd not ſuſtain this ſlender trial.
" Humility from hence be taught,
" Learn candour to another's fault;
" Go know, like Eve, from this ſad dinner,
" You're both a vain and curious ſinner."

THE END.